



Ontario
Ministry of
Labour

Handicapped
Employment
Program

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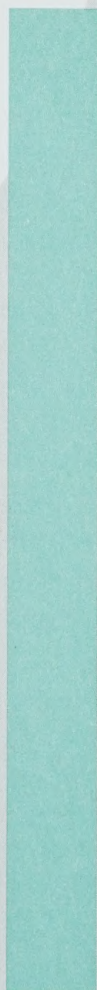
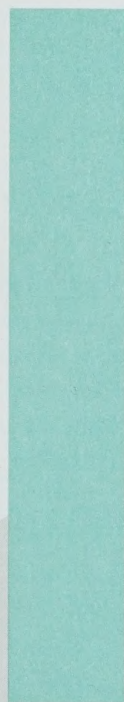
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Measuring Up



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Accessibility
For
People
With
Disabilities

What is accessibility?

When we talk about accessibility we are primarily thinking about the ease or difficulty with which people with mobility impairments can enter, and function in, a building. Included are wheelchair users, those who walk with the help of braces or crutches, and older people.

Solutions as simple as clearing aisles and making such things as shelves, files and cabinets easy to get to will help not only the disabled person but all your staff.

You can also make your workplace more accessible for people with vision or hearing impairments. Brailled elevator numbers and flashing light alarms are just a couple of examples.

A barrier-free worksite means that everyone can move and work freely, independently and safely.

Does your facility measure up?

It takes someone with special training to determine a building's accessibility. That's why making even minor changes are best left to an expert who is familiar with barrier-free design and who will provide cost-conscious advice. Also seek advice from the potential users of your facility – people with disabilities.

You will want someone who is knowledgeable to examine:

- parking
- ramps
- entrances
- washrooms
- elevators
- stairways
- floor surfaces
- signs

Following these suggestions can help you to avoid costly mistakes. Ramps, as an example, need to be built at just the right slope with non-slip surfaces and proper hand rails. Many aren't, making it difficult, if not impossible, for people with disabilities to use them.

Like many employers you may envision major renovations when a minor modification is all that is needed. A drinking fountain, for instance, costs far more to lower than it does to provide a paper-cup dispenser.

What about costs?

Did you know that an existing building can be made accessible for less than it would cost to clean its floors for an entire year? And, that new facilities can become barrier-free at little or no cost? Most people don't, that's why knowledgeable advice is so important.

One major corporation's engineers, for example, advised that it would be very expensive to make its headquarters accessible. Barrier-free design experts proved that it could be done for only 2% of the estimated costs!

HEP can help

Consultants from the Handicapped Employment Program (HEP) are available to discuss accessibility and other useful steps that you can follow when considering job-seekers with disabilities. They can also provide you with information about government incentives.

Contact:

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Honourable
William Wrye,
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